

Preservation Briefs: Celebrating 25 Years

The year 2000 marks the 25th anniversary of Preservation Briefs. "PBs" are a well-known series of illustrated pamphlets serving architects, homeowners, contractors, public administrators, students, and preservationists of every kind. In 1975, Technical Preservation Services (TPS), a branch of the National Park Service Heritage Preservation Services Program, published "PB 1." Since then, TPS has issued 40 others. (Of the 40, 29 were written or co-authored by TPS staff; all others were edited by TPS staff and ushered through the production process.) And TPS has kept every one in print for 25 years!

Attend a meeting of a local historic district review commission to discuss a new addition to a historic building, and chances are you will receive a copy of "Preservation Brief 14." Take a college course on the preservation of historic farm buildings, and chances are the professor will use "Preservation Brief 20" as a basic text. Hire a preservation professional to monitor graffiti removal, and chances are the consultant will first turn to "Preservation Brief 38" before writing cleaning specifications. Indeed, chances are that *any* preservationist doing *anything* on a historic building *anywhere* in the country will turn to a Preservation Brief.

Series hallmarks include:

Variety

PBs cover a great variety of topics:

- *Materials*: Adobe (PB 5); Terra Cotta (PB 7), Concrete (PB 15), Plaster (PB 21 and PB 23), Stucco (PB 22), Cast Iron (PB 27), and Stained Glass (PB 33)
- *Building Features*: Roofing (PB 4), Wooden Windows (PB 9), Storefronts (PB 11), Exterior Additions (PB 14), Interiors (PB 18)
- *Preservation Treatments*: Cleaning and Waterproof Coating (PB 1), Repointing Mortar Joints (PB 2), Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning (PB 6), Heating, Ventilating and Cooling Historic Buildings (PB 24), Painting Historic Interiors (PB 28)
- *Building Types and Other Resources*: Barns (PB 20), Signs (PB 25), Cultural Landscapes (PB 36)
- *Health and Safety Issues*: Reducing Lead-Paint Hazards (PB 37), Seismic Retrofit (PB 41)

- *Researching Historic Buildings*: Identifying Architectural Character (PB 17), Understanding Old Buildings (PB 35)
- *Social Issues*: Accessibility (PB 32), and Conserving Energy (PB 3)

Broad Outreach

- Over *two million* copies of the 41 Preservation Briefs have been distributed.
- TPS has given hundreds of thousands of free copies to State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs).
- TPS has taken great efforts to ensure that every brief has remained in print.
- Briefs are offered at a very modest cost: most cost \$1.00; the most expensive are never more than \$2.00.

Responsiveness to Preservation Community

TPS has developed PBs in response to specific needs of the preservation community:

- The energy crisis of the late 1970s threatened historic buildings—especially their windows. TPS responded with "PB 3: Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings."
- Sandblasting was widespread in the late 1970s and early 1980s. "PB 6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings" helped stem this practice.
- The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers requested information on historic barns from NPS. The result: "PB 20: The Preservation of Historic Barns."
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) posed new challenges for owners of historic buildings. TPS responded with "PB 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible."

Continuing Series Development

- TPS continues to develop topics with the needs of the preservation community firmly in mind. In the works are "PBs" on Building Maintenance, Cast Stone, Historic Interior Trim, Historic Structure Reports, and Porches.
- The PB series has entered the 21st century. TPS has posted all 41 of the "PBs" on the World Wide Web, and is working to take advantage of the new possibilities the Internet offers in the design and production of future "PBs."